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SUBJECT: REPORT ON A REGIONAL PLANNING MEETING CROP CRISIS CONTROL PROJECT (C3P) KIGALI, RWANDA JUNE 13 - 15, 2006

Summary

1.The second stage of implementation of the Crop Crisis Control Project (C3P) was launched with a regional planning workshop in Kigali, Rwanda June 13-15, 2006. The goal of this activity, supported by the Famine Prevention Fund, is a regionally coordinated response to the catastrophic spread of two serious diseases of staple food crops, Cassava Mosaic Virus disease (CMD) and Banana Xanthomonas Wilt (BXW) in six countries of East and Central Africa. The meeting brought together over 70 people from seven USAID missions and implementing partners. They agreed on procedures to get a wide range of activities going on the ground as quickly and efficiently as possible. Participants reviewed the current state of knowledge about the two epidemics, and about what technologies are available for combating them. Past and current activities in each of the countries were reviewed. A system was discussed which combines household surveys and geographic information systems to targeting areas where the diseases are likely to tip significant numbers of households into food insecurity. Too often programs that distribute plantings in response to an emergency have not proven to be sustainable, so better methods and more sustainable approaches for the distribution of disease- resistant cassava cuttings were discussed. Approaches for slowing or even stopping the spread of banana wilt were reviewed. The country teams worked together to lay the foundation for their workplans, and were given clear instructions for completing those documents. The meeting successfully defined the scope of the project and the procedures that will be used to organize the activities of all of the partners into a single framework. The basic outline of the monitoring, evaluation and reporting system was developed. An Advisory Steering Committee

that will work virtually was put in place.

Background

¶2. The Crop Crisis Control Project (C3P) is a regional activity supported with $5 million from the Famine Prevention Fund, a U.S. Government facility set up to encourage innovative, focused, short-term programs that can reduce food insecurity and build effective linkages between emergency relief and development assistance. It has been organized within the framework of the Presidential Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA). The activity is managed by USAID/East Africa, in cooperation with EGAT, AFR/SD, Food for Peace, OFDA and the bilateral USAID Missions in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Limited Presence program in Burundi.

¶3. C3P has been organized under the auspices of COMESA (the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and ASARECA (the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa). Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has been awarded a grant to implement regionally coordinated, well targeted activities in all six countries. Their largest partner with a sub-award is the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and together they are leading a network of regional associations and agricultural institutions, national agricultural research organizations, NGOs and local implementing partners. Through separate but coordinated ?fast-track? mechanisms, existing partners of the bilateral missions in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC are participating. In principle, fast-track resources are

made available to facilitate bridging between specific bilateral mission supported activities with new C3P activities. In Uganda, a total of US$127,000 were added to the existing project with the Agricultural Productivity Program (APEP) to continue campaigns against the spread of Banana wilt disease and distribution of mosaic free, cassava planting materials. In Rwanda, US$60,000 was added to the Agricultural Technology Development and Transfer Project (ATDT) to bridge mission supported activities combating the spread of both Cassava Mosaic and Banana Bacterial Wilt in selected regions. In the DRC, a total of US$117,375 was added to a mission supported project with IITA, focused on improving rural livelihoods through the rehabilitation of banana and cassava production in Eastern Congo. During this period, most of the fast-track activities have been concluded, setting the stage for the start of the formal work plan of the C3P program. The sum of these activities will strengthen regional and national mechanisms to deliver agricultural technologies and knowledge to rural stakeholders, reduce the impact of these plant diseases on the food insecurity of vulnerable households, while aiding famers to speed agricultural recovery. The end date of the project is September 30, 2007.

¶4. Cassava Mosaic Virus Disease has been recognized in East Africa for more than a century. Rapid spread of a new and more severe strains of the disease were reported in north-central Uganda in the late 1980s. This has since expanded into a ?pandemic? over a vast area of East and Central Africa, with devastating effects on cassava production. The zone currently affected now covers all of Uganda, Western Kenya, Southern Sudan, Eastern DRC, North-western Tanzania, all of Burundi and all of Rwanda (apart from the Cyangugu region). It is arguably the greatest single threat to staple food production in the sub-region. A recent assessment estimates the area affected at 2.6 million hectares, with losses totaling 22 million

metric tons annually. A common response of farmers has been to abandon cassava cultivation. As cassava is the primary food staple in much of the affected area, food security has been drastically undermined. Virtually all of the varieties cultivated by farmers have proven to be susceptible. But new, resistant varieties have been selected by IITA in collaboration with national scientists, distributed by EARRNET, ASARECA?s cassava network, and have been multiplied and distributed. IITA has been supported in the past by USAID?s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), to document the epidemiology of CMD and to organize the multiplication and distribution of disease-resistant planting material in collaboration with multiple partners. The C3P will speed up this process, as well as target distribution to areas most vulnerable to food insecurity.

¶5. Banana Wilt is caused by the bacterium Xanthomonas campestris pv. musacearum (Xcm). It was initially reported about 90 years ago in Ethiopia, as a disease of a close relative of the banana called Enset. By 1974, the disease had jumped to bananas in Ethiopia. Then in 2001, outbreaks were reported in Uganda and the DRC. In five years wilt has spread rapidly through all the central districts of Uganda and has moved into the major banana producing districts in the western and southwestern parts of the country. Likewise, in the DRC, the infected area has increased substantially to cover large parts of Masisi District in North Kivu Province. In Rwanda, two infected sites were observed in the Cyanzarwe district of Gisenyi Province in

October 2005. In Tanzania the disease is spreading rapidly from the Ugandan border through the western districts where bananas are a major staple food. BXW causes early ripening and rotting of fruits, even in the absence of other apparent external signs. As it progresses, it causes wilting and the death of the plant. Second crops sprouted from infected mats are severely diseased and often wilt before producing bunches or produce bunches with rotten fruits. Once established in a locality, the disease can spread rapidly up to 70 km per year and is difficult to eradicate. Without proper management, yields in affected areas go down to virtually zero.

¶6. Bananas are extremely important for food security and as a source of household income in much of the Great Lakes region. Over 20 million people depend on them as a main source of livelihood. They are grown both as a staple food crop and for income generation mainly through brewing and regional export of both cooking and dessert bananas. Bananas also protect soil against erosion and leaching, both through their massive root system and their aerial leaf cover, especially in the hilly terrain found in much of the Great Lakes Region. The components for a regional response have been developed by ASARECA?s Banana Research Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (BARNESA), working in collaboration with the Ugandan national research institute (NARO) and scientists from the International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain (INIBAP), IITA and other international and national institutions. Control measures for banana wilt have included public awareness campaigns that inform farmers about the symptoms and teach disease control practices, including the removal of the male bud to restrict spread by insects, destruction of infected plants and the repeated sterilization of infected tools to prevent spread from plant to plant.

Targeting the Vulnerable

¶7. Small-scale, low income farmers in the project area ? Uganda, Western Kenya, Western Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Eastern DRC - depend heavily on a small number of staple food crops, of which cassava and

bananas are among the most important. There are many causes of chronic food insecurity in these areas, tied both to uncertainty in supplies (availability), low-incomes and high and fluctuating food prices in poorly functioning markets that restrict what consumers can afford to buy (access). Food utilization patterns have major effects on micro-nutrient malnutrition and other qualitative factors. The effects of civil conflicts, periodic droughts and a range of other factors have provoked emergency food shortages in the DRC, Burundi, parts of Uganda and scattered areas elsewhere in the zone.

¶8. The C3P is designed to help partners prepare for and mitigate the effects of the two diseases, so that sudden declines in the productivity of these crops will not tip large numbers of people into food insecurity. The impacts of biotic stresses on food insecurity have not previously been documented systematically. Representatives of IITA and ASARECA?s Foodnet program explained how they are refining and applying methods to help the C3P partners target interventions where they will have the greatest impact, and to document the process. The extent and causes of food insecurity will be assessed, building on household surveys, as well as secondary data from multiple sources. IITA?s geographic information systems laboratory is pulling these results together with land-use maps developed by the FAO?s AfriCover project, satellite imagery, data on the distribution of cassava and bananas data on the incidence and severity of the two diseases and data on the distribution of population. The resulting maps will help the C3P partners target interventions, and to monitor their effects. In areas where severe conditions have triggered interventions by emergency agencies, there will be many opportunities for C3P partners to cooperate with programs working with food aid, nutrition, etc.

Demand-driven Approaches to Disseminating Planting Material

¶9. For a number of years, Catholic Relief Services has been accumulating experience with Seed Fairs, a system for providing vouchers to vulnerable farmers with which they purchase seed from other farmers within the areas where they live. This market-based approach has shown clear advantages, compared to the wide scale distribution of free seeds and tools to the victims of disasters and the chronically food insecure. Food Fairs provide an emergency subsidy on the demand side, rather than on supply, and encourage the revitalization of local systems of production and small-scale trade. The C3P project will adapt these methods to systems for the multiplication and distribution of cassava stakes and banana suckers, which are much bulkier and more perishable than grain or bean seeds and which can themselves spread the very diseases that the project is designed to control. It was agreed that the C3P partners will constantly evaluate their systems of multiplication and distribution to tailor subsidies to overcome specific bottlenecks and to encourage market transactions.

Getting Ahead of the Front as Banana Wilt Spreads

¶10. The partners working on BXW will build on the experience that has been built up in Uganda over the past few years. In areas as yet unaffected, partners will mobilize local communities to form task forces to mobilize community organizations, NGOs and extension agents to teach farmers to recognize and prepare for the disease. As the disease spreads into frontline areas, the first approach will be the aggressive eradication of pockets of infestation. Programs will train trainers, who will move out into the communities

to teach farmers the cultural practices needed to save their bananas. In endemic zones, where farmers will see the disastrous impact of the disease, the focus will be on intensive de-budding and where necessary, destruction of affected plants. The clean planting material of relatively ?wilt-escaping? varieties will be distributed (no resistant varieties have yet been identified).

Development of Workplans and Opportunities for Sub-awards

¶11. The C3P is supported by the Famine Prevention Fund as a focused, short-term intervention. This means that all of the partners are operating under heavy pressure to finalize their workplans and get activities moving on the ground. CRS has hired a Chief of Party, a Deputy who is also in charge of monitoring and evaluation, and managers in each of the six countries. IITA has dedicated time of some of its senior scientists and has also hired assistants to deliver specific project outputs. In addition, CRS retains funds that are available for sub-awards to additional

NGOs, community-based organizations and other partners, to implement specific elements of the workplans. Partners will be invited to prepare concept notes by early August and full proposals to be approved and funded in September. The goal is to get field implementation fully underway by early October, when the next major planting season begins in much of the region. An Advisory Steering Committee was set up to review activities for quality, to maintain a coherent regional approach, and to keep the participating institutions and key advisors up to date. This committee will operate virtually, by e-mail and telephone, to keep transactions costs low.

Monitoring and Evaluation

¶12. One of the key objectives of the C3P is to monitor and document how a coordinated regional response to regional problems affecting vulnerable farmers can add value to interventions on a bilateral basis, and by emergency response agencies. The Monitoring and Evaluation plan was discussed at the workshop, and will be completely elaborated before field activities begin. The results of food security surveys and the GIS mapping will already have been published by that time.

Participation

¶13. A total of 75 people participated in the workshop, representing the following institutions:

USAID Missions: USAID/East Africa, EGAT, Rwanda, DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania,

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA): Secretariat in Lusaka

SIPDIS

Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA): Regional Network Coordinators for cassava, bananas, and Policy Analysis.

Agricultural Research Institute for the Great Lakes (IRAZ): Direcor

Danish Seed Health Center: Expert

Catholic Relief Services (CRS): Regional offices in Nairobi and Kinshasa, representatives from all six country offices

International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA): Deputy Director, senior scientists on cassava and bananas, economics, and GIS

Rwanda: International Services for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR), Extension, World Food Programme(WFP),World Vision International (WVI), CARITAS.

Uganda: National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Ministry of Agriculture, National Agricultural Advisory and Development Services (NAADS) (extension service provider), World Vision, EcoTrust (a national NGO). DANIDA, UNFEE (farmers? association)

Kenya: KARI (agricultural research), REFSO (national NGO),Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA) (private sector)

Tanzania: ARD (agricultural research), Catholic Diocese

DRC: INERA (Institut National pour l'Etude et la Recherche Agronomiques (DR-Congo), SENASEM (seed agency), Graben University, SECID (U.S.-based agency involved in cassava multiplication), Food for the Hungry International (FHI) and CARITAS

Burundi was unable to send any national representatives to this workshop, but CRS and the USAID office followed up a week later with an in-country meeting of key stakeholders

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